

From: Robin Datta
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/24/02 6:08am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Dear Sirs:

It seems AOL is trying to revive a putrefied corpse. There is no question that a separate browser apart from IE would never have reached the seamlessness and efficacy of the present system. And even to this date, if one wants, there are several browsers out there that one can download, install and use as an alternate browser. Some of these browsers do serve special needs and I use Opera from time to time.

But to change the venue for competition to the courts from the marketplace is, if anything, uncompetitive. If AOL has a better browser, let it offer the item as a package deal with AOL service to its customers.

At one time I was also an AOLie, when they came out with an easy interface for Windows3.1. However they did not offer internet access. That was in the days of the net before the web. But I switched to Netcom because I wanted to have Internet access rather than be limited to AOL content and to their restrictive policies (the so-called "Terms of Service". I did not go back to AOL after that. While with Netcom, I had a shell account, and I had to learn how to set up my shell and a bunch of UNIX commands to get around on the net (no web then). All downloads were by FTP to my shell account and then had to be xmodem / ymodem / zmodem to my hard disk. I am glad that I had the opportunity to learn how to work UNIX, FTP and the x, y, and z modem protocols as well as ARCHIE, VERONICA, and the mailreaders, newsreaders and wordprocessors of the UNIX shells.

And when the web came along, I initially used SlipKnot to access the web through my shell account. Then I used the PPP emulator that originated in Australia. It had to be placed in my shell account and compiled to make it active. I forget its name but I probably still have it on one of my numerous floppies that have long been collecting dust. With the PPP emulation, I did use the Netscape browser but I never felt it right to have to cough up cash for what I thought should be an integral part of the system: I got the PPP emulator for free. The coming of the internet Explorer changed the situation; the efficiency or lack thereof of the PPP emulator led me to subscribe to a PPP account at Netcom.

Ofcourse Netcom was bought up by ICG and then by MindSpring which merged with Earthlink, and there it stands today. I am grateful to Microsoft for making it possible to do things more easily; I reject AOL as an ISP since I want my ISP to be pure conduit and no content. (That's

the reason why I do not go with MSN).

I say get off Microsoft's back. Go back to the market and do what you can do. The courts are not a substitute for the market when one fails in the market. We have a good thing going with Microsoft's products and services. AOL did not and does not cut the mustard, at least with those who care to do better.

Robin Datta
9228 N Stoneridge Ln
Fresno CA 93720-1210
robbin@ix.netcom.com